



Department of Justice

**United States Attorney Joseph H. Hogsett
Southern District of Indiana**

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CONTACT: TIM HORTY
(317) 229-2409
tim.horty@usdoj.gov

HOGSETT ANNOUNCES ARREST OF JASPER MAN ON CHILD EXPLOITATION CHARGES

“Operation Community Watch” prosecution allegedly involves thousands of images and videos

PRESS RELEASE

JASPER – Joseph H. Hogsett, the United States Attorney, announced today that Kurtis Head, age 33, of Jasper, has been charged with twelve counts of receiving child pornography. Hogsett said the filing of formal charges comes as his office has launched Operation Community Watch, a new effort which aims to reduce the abuse of Hoosier children through innovative investigative techniques and aggressive prosecution.

“These cases are always difficult, both as a prosecutor and as a parent,” Hogsett said. “But they are important, not just to ensure the safety of Hoosier children, but also to send a message that we will not tolerate such behavior in our communities. You are not anonymous online – if you engage in this activity, we will find you and you will be held accountable.”

According to charging documents, Head was arrested after a collaborative investigation that involved Homeland Security Investigations and the Jasper Police Department. Detectives connected to a computer online that was sharing images and videos of child pornography. That activity was then allegedly traced to an apartment in Jasper. On July 31, a federal search warrant was executed at the residence.

As a result of this search, law enforcement allegedly located a hard drive that contained thousands of images and videos depicting minors engaged in sexual conduct. In addition, the criminal complaint alleges that the defendant may have been responsible for the sexual abuse of a six year old female child approximately two years ago. Head also faces state charges related to these allegations.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Lauren Wheatley, who is prosecuting the case for the government, Head faces a sentence under federal guidelines between five and twenty years on

each count. In addition, the defendant also could be sentenced to years of supervised release at the end of his prison term, as well as lifetime registration as a sexual offender.

This arrest comes as Hogsett has announced a comprehensive crackdown on child exploitation in Indiana. Just last year, he launched “Operation Community Watch,” which will allow prosecutors and investigators to use cutting-edge techniques to identify and charge people in Hoosier communities who are engaged in the receipt and trafficking of child pornography materials.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a larger nationwide initiative to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice. Hogsett pointed out that in the last Project Safe Childhood reporting year, the Office prosecuted 52 defendants, an increase of 37% over the prior year, and 49 defendants were convicted and sentenced. These are all-time records for the Office. The Office conviction rate for PSC cases was 100%, a level it has been at since 1991.

The greatest measure of the PSC program’s impact, however, is the identification and rescue of child victims of sexual exploitation and abuse. Over the last year, the U.S. Attorney’s Office successfully identified more than 120 child victims, including minors in Indiana, numerous places in the United States, Canada, Switzerland, and other countries around the world.

Led nationally by United States Attorneys’ Offices and the Criminal Division’s Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS), Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov.

Informations, indictments, and criminal complaints are only a charge and are not evidence of guilt. A defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial at which the government must prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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